

BIOGRAPHICAL  
SKETCH OF  
THOMAS R. LEE, ESQ.

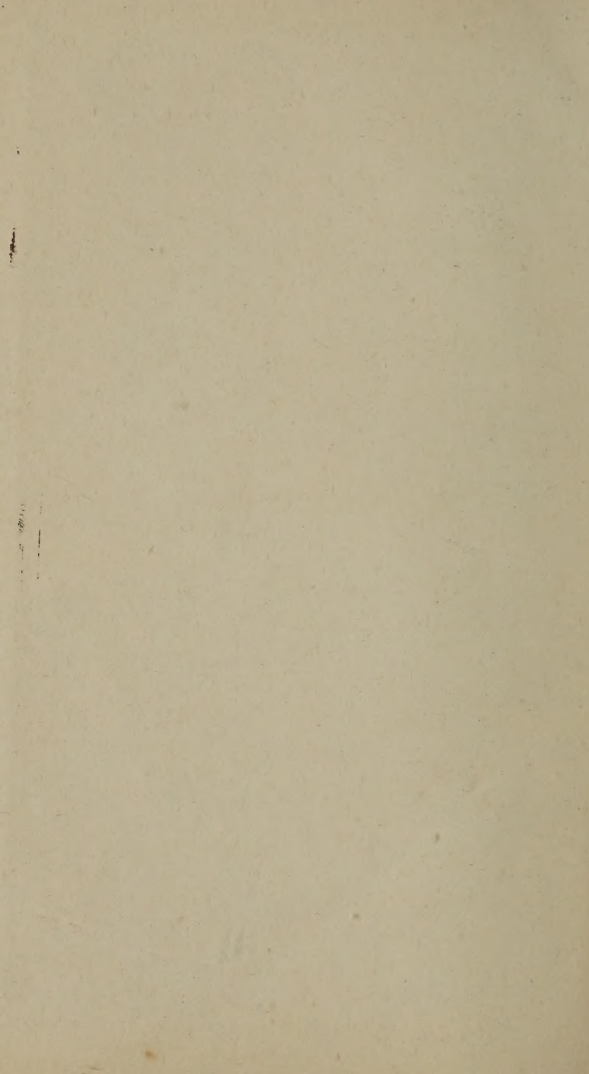
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Biographical sketch of  
Thomas R. Lee, Esq.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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THOMAS R. LEE, ESQ.

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WITH THE

Sermon Preached at his Funeral

BY

REV. A. L. LINDSLEY.

NEW YORK:

ROBERT CARTER AND BROTHERS,

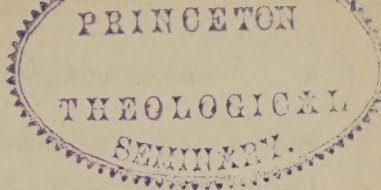
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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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DIED, at his residence, Croton Falls, New York, on the 24th of January, 1860, THOMAS R. LEE, in the sixtieth year of his age.

MR. LEE was a man of fine talents and respectable acquirements. Having taken his degree at Dickinson College, Pennsylvania, he studied law in the city of New York, and was admitted to the bar in 1825. His integrity of character, his industry and gentlemanly bearing, together with his ample qualifications as a jurist, soon secured for him an honorable and remunerative practice. At this period he was somewhat disposed to enter public life. Accordingly, we see him

at one time holding a place in the Municipal Government of the city of New York, and again, a Representative in the Assembly of the State ; but he soon discovered that his principles, his habits, and his tastes were utterly unsuited to political life, and he retired from that field altogether.

His religious character, however, chiefly claims our notice. He was the child of pious parents, by whom he was carefully instructed in the truths of the Gospel, and through the influence of this early training, accompanied by the restraining grace of God, he was kept from the vices common to youth, and distinguished for exemplary deportment long before he openly avowed himself on the Lord's side. It was under the ministrations of his life-long friend, Dr. McElroy, Pastor of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, that he made a

public profession of religion. Of this church he was for many years a member, and for several years a ruling Elder, and in both these relations he had the entire confidence and respect of his brethren.

His worldly circumstances having become easy if not affluent, his own health and that of his wife not being robust, and both, perhaps, preferring the quiet and retirement of the country to the noise and bustle of the city, in 1843 he removed to Croton Falls; and there, it is believed, he has been a great blessing. To say nothing of the healthful influence silently exerted upon the community by his daily walk and conversation, he has, by his generous contributions, with the assistance of a few other worthy individuals, been instrumental in the erection of a neat and comfortable church edifice, in the procuring

of a parsonage, and in the maintenance of the regular administration of Divine ordinances.

In the winter of 1849, Mr. LEE was called to part with the wife of his youth. This was a sore bereavement to him and to his children. But that excellent lady \* had left her impress on every one of those children, and the seed sown in their hearts by her pious instruction, watered by the instruction and counsels and prayers of their father, has, through the blessing of God, sprung up and yielded a plentiful harvest. Five of these children are already safe within the church of God, and it is not doubted that the remaining three will be there in due time.

About nine months before his decease, Mr. LEE's health began to fail, and from that time until near the close of life, there were in his

own mind and in the minds of his friends, the alternations of hope and fear in respect to the issue. But during all this period, though *his prevailing* impression was that his course was well-nigh run, the prospect of its termination brought no terrors to his mind. His language was, "The result, for life or for death, I commit to him who ordereth all things well." The thought, indeed, of leaving his beloved children behind him, five of them still in their minority, at times pressed heavily on his heart: but then the promise—"leave thy fatherless children with me, and I will preserve them alive," came to his relief, and he was enabled to roll this, and every other solicitude, over upon his covenant-keeping God.

As time passed on, he busied himself in setting "his house in order." The Bible, of

which from boyhood he had been a diligent reader, now became increasingly precious. He loved not only to *read*, but to *study* it—often dwelling for days on a single chapter. It was his daily bread. Out of the fullness of his heart he spake of the things of eternity as he had opportunity, and *whenever* he had opportunity, to his children, his servants, and to his neighbors, even when calling upon matters of business. To one friend, he writes, “Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Believe in him with all your heart. Cast yourself unreservedly and implicitly upon the grace of God reigning through his righteousness, and you *shall* be saved.” To another friend—“Blessed be God, that, notwithstanding my many shortcomings and backslidings, and my great unfruitfulness, I have not, at this moment, a religion to look

for. Christ is precious to me—precious in what he is, for what he has done and suffered, and for what he is now doing in the holy place above.” As to the frames and exercises of his mind, their most marked features were—a deep sense of his own sinfulness and unworthiness, together with an unshaken confidence in the righteousness of the Redeemer, and the mercy of God through him. He would say, “When I look *at myself*, I am so sinful and vile that *I cannot hope*; but when I look *at Christ* *I cannot doubt*. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever—in him do I put my trust—and he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.” Though his sufferings at times were so great, that he would cry out, “O Lord, have mercy on me”—“I *would* bless God and die”—yet, he could also say,

“All will be *well* at last.” And upon his daughter saying to him a little before his departure—“God is the strength of your heart and your portion forever ;” he replied, “Yes, *it is so.*” Thus sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, a humble, faithful, and devoted servant of God.

## NOTE.

The following brief notice of MRS. LEE was written at the time of her decease.

“DIED, in the Island of St. Croix, on the 30th of December, 1849, MARY LEE, wife of THOMAS R. LEE, of Croton Falls, New York. Mrs. LEE was the third daughter of the late Henry Rankin, and her history furnishes another instance of the happy results of proper domestic training. At the early age of fifteen years, she made a profession of religion

in the Scotch Presbyterian Church, New York, and with that profession, her walk through life has been consistent. Naturally diffident and retiring, and from principle opposed to everything like ostentatious display, her religion was not *thrust* upon you ; but you saw its softening, refining, hallowing influence in all your intercourse with her. In her *domestic* character especially, does she deserve to be held up to the imitation of those of her sex who would wish to be, as she was, esteemed and loved. Believing that woman was designed by her Creator to render home a paradise, around the circle of her home she threw the magic of her graces and her virtues. As a wife and mother, she was all that woman could be. But she is gone—taken away in the midst of her days—taken away too under circumstances at once mys-

terious and trying. Accompanying her husband some two months ago to the West Indies, (whither they went for the benefit of the health of a beloved daughter,) she was seized with the fever peculiar to that region, and in a short time brought down to the grave. As might be expected from her character, her end was *peace*. Though in her closing hours, true to the instincts of the *mother*, her children pressed heavily upon her ; yet clinging to his promises calmly and confidingly, she commended herself and them to her heavenly Father. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors ; and their works do follow them.”

## HELP, LORD! FOR THE GODLY MAN CEASETH.



THE SUBSTANCE OF A DISCOURSE DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL OF THOMAS R. LEE, ESQ., AT CROTON FALLS, JAN. 26, 1860, BY REV. A. L. LINDSLEY.

PSALM xii. 1.—Help, Lord ! for the godly man ceaseth ; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

THE removal of a veteran in the ranks of righteousness from our field of spiritual conflict, is an event always to be deplored ; how much more when a tried and able leader falls ! Survivors, though their ranks be thinned, and sorrow claims its tribute, do not despair. Though the loss is severer when our numbers are few, or aggravated by the neutrality of the multitude towards the glorious cause we espouse, and though that cause seems thereby

imperilled by surrounding hostility, yet our confidence in the Captain of Salvation is unimpaired. We find strength in his resources, and consolation in his revealed will.

The Twelfth Psalm has a primary reference to a state of society in which religion was dishonored, and the laws of morality were relaxed ; and, consequently, the safeguards of society were overthrown. Ungodliness prevailed among all classes, and unfaithfulness marked the intercourse of man with man. This Psalm described the social condition of the Israelites in the time of Saul, especially towards the close of his reign. And when pious men were silenced by oppression or removed by death, their brethren, who remained as witnesses for righteousness and truth, prayed to the God of Israel, Help, Lord ! for the number of godly

men is diminishing ; faithful men are disappearing !

Such a state of society is too often found under different latitudes and in different ages, and modern times are fruitful in reproducing it. They who lament the spread of irreligion and immorality, and the exit of men who have bravely breasted the desolating flood, must learn to cease from man, and look to God for help. But their faith must be intelligent and scriptural. They will expect no miraculous intervention to sustain the pillars of religion and social order, but will pray God to amend the loss by endowing others to occupy the places of those who have gone to their reward.

If godly and faithful men stand in such relations to the highest interests of our race,

their character, and the nature of their influence, and the sources of their success, are worthy of profound study ; and their example should be the object of universal and diligent emulation.

THE GODLY MAN is one who resembles God in his moral qualities, and who is growing in conformity to him. He is in covenant and communion with his Maker. The FAITHFUL MAN is one who discharges all his duties with conscientious intelligence, promptness and completeness, and respects all his obligations. The man who is godly is also faithful ; and hence we have a comprehensive though brief description of a character which will engage our meditations to-day.

A radical change must be wrought in the

spiritual nature of man to produce such a character, for such is not his natural state. He must have new and better dispositions to be a godly man, and he must draw his motives from eternity to be in its comprehensive sense a faithful man.

The oracles of divine truth, which cannot mislead us, reveal the fact of man's departure from original righteousness; and daily experience and observation sustain the humiliating truth, that in us—that is, in our flesh—there dwelleth no good thing. A new and vital principle must be diffused through the soul, for it is dead in ungodliness. It is the principle of the new life which brings the soul back to God, and restores the divine likeness which sin had obliterated, being renewed in the spirit of his mind in righteousness and true holiness, after the image of

him that created him. This is the new life, which is hid with Christ in God. It breathes after him, exclaiming, All my springs are in thee! This change is therefore supernatural and superangelic; it is divine. It is the work of the Holy Ghost.

All the elements of the godly and faithful man's character centre in this radical change. Without it, there can be no godliness. With it, access to the Most High is open, and the soul is visited with righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

This renewal is most spiritual, and it is likewise very influential. It is the putting on of the new man, when old things pass away, and all things become new. Its fountain is hidden within the Rock of Ages, but its waters flow forth to refresh the earth and bedew the heavens. Its influence is there-

fore spiritual and salutary. A new motive controlling all others is implanted in the soul, which impels him to honor God through sentiments of affinity and gratitude. He is God's son, ransomed from death. Regarding himself, therefore, as bound by the most solemn obligations to God as his Father and Redeemer, he espouses his cause, and openly unites himself with his people. Manifesting the spirit of true discipleship by obedience to the precept of Jesus Christ to confess him before men, he enters the pale of the visible Church.

The character of the godly man is therefore shown by associating himself with the godly. The cause of his Master is dear to him, and he forsakes all to follow Christ with his flock. He is identified with that cause, and he knows no interest alien from that.

His views of education and social life, the progress of civilization and the affairs of nations, receive their form and complexion and degree of importance as these various interests stand providentially related to the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth.

The church is a spiritual fraternity with a visible organization, which must be sustained by all the auxiliaries necessary to its efficient support and propagation among mortals who are infatuated with the perishable things of time, and regardless of eternity. Ye are my witnesses, said our Lord to his disciples. The church must let her light shine before men. Supremely devoted to the church's Head, the godly and faithful man therefore loves the place where God's honor dwelleth, and where he records his name; and he

resorts thither to behold the power and glory of the Lord, for strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Regarding the church of Christ as the visible representation of his kingdom on earth, the godly man desires its prevalence throughout the world, and manifests his sincerity by consistent and persevering efforts to extend it. He would thus seek to bring every household under its benign and saving power ; and while he prays " Thy Kingdom come," he exerts his personal influence, and freely appropriates his property to bring it to the notice and knowledge of men.

While, however, he finds within the church an ample theatre of usefulness, he does not neglect the employment of other legitimate instrumentalities for doing good. His liberal soul deviseth liberal things. The streams

which flow from the perennial spring within the church's precincts, he conducts in sparkling rivulets beyond that sacred enclosure to irrigate the world's barren wastes. He is one of God's philanthropists, who seeks to cure the evils of society by removing their cause. To make the stream pure, he would cleanse the fountain ; and amid the providential sufferings of mortals, he moveth to gladden and bless ; he visiteth the widow and the fatherless in their affliction ; the poor find in him a helper, and the friendless a friend. Nor are his alms and prayers confined exclusively to any class. He loveth even his enemies ; he blesseth them that curse him ; he doeth good to them that hate him ; he prayeth for them that abuse him ; and thus he shows that he is a godly man, by imitating our Father in Heaven, who

maketh the sun to rise upon the evil as well as upon the good.

There are both method and consistency in his proceedings. He is regulated by moral considerations, well-founded and intelligently understood. These he gathers from the instructions of unerring Wisdom, not in the letter which killeth, but in the spirit that giveth life. He consults in secret the oracles of God, and communes with him who uttered them through holy men, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

As the renewal of the spirit is the key to his character, so communion with God gives that character its tone. He learns that to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. This world has lost its despotic power over him, because being risen with Christ he seeks those things which are above, and sets his

mind upon them. As his citizenship also is in heaven, he becomes dead to the world, as an object of eager pursuit. He knows how to be lawfully engaged with the concerns of time, and faithfully meets their legitimate claims, while he is busy with the interests of the world to come. From unseen but daily audiences with his Maker, he goes forth upon life's highway an example of consistency, uprightness, godliness and beneficence. For in those interviews, the source of all spiritual enlightenment and energy, he adds every virtue to his faith; and hence he is neither idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ. From that hallowed retreat he bears about with him the sweetness of the sanctity which he breathed there, and diffuses it through all his intercourse with men. Thus he daily follows Christ. The world

may not see it, because the world is not observant of spiritual realities ; although it cannot be entirely insensible to their peculiar excellence. But souls upon whose altar the same incense burns, and who catch the same inspiration, discover with sacred delight the beauty and the brightness which are making him a holocaust unto God.

Such is the character of the godly man : such the source of his excellence, and the nature of his influence. When such men sleep with their fathers, there should be universal mourning, for the world encounters a great calamity : it suffers a loss which cannot be repaired from its own resources. The course of this world is corrupt : its morality is unstable and fictitious, because its maxims are founded upon expediency alone, leaving every man to decide when his interests will

be best promoted by rectitude, and when it is expedient to overstep its limitations. Intense selfishness, the offspring of alienation from God, characterizes the intercourse of families, communities, and nations, modified alone by the spirit of the Gospel, which inculcates brotherly kindness and compassion.

The godly and faithful man is an exponent of that spirit, and diffuses the sentiments of justice and benevolence, mercy and self-denial, among men. His views of expediency relate not to the adoption or rejection of moral principles, for these are immutable and eternal, and neither law nor custom nor emergency can modify them, but to the propriety of enforcing them upon others to the full compass of their claims in each specific case. What justice may lawfully demand of others it

may not always exact, because benevolence pleads for a milder issue.

He therefore, putting on charity, which is the girdle of perfection, tempers justice with clemency, repudiates the law of retaliation, illustrates the law of self-denial, breathes peace where discord rages, frowns upon fraud and oppression, and emulates that magnanimity which shames the meanness that would take advantage of imprudences, misfortunes, or necessities.

The world can ill spare such living lessons of wisdom and charity. She has few of her own, she originates none. But the godly man, while thus exemplifying the virtues of his Master's rule to do unto others as he would that they should do unto him, exacts upon himself the full discharge of all his own obligations. He renders unto all their

dues, and owes no man anything but love. He traverses the entire field of personal duty a FAITHFUL MAN. Enlightened by that wisdom which cometh from above, he acknowledges his permanent responsibilities ; and, guided by that wisdom which is profitable to direct, he assumes new obligations with prudent circumspection, and then meets their requirements at whatever sacrifice. The license of the world which connives at fraud discovers no asylum in his principles, and therefore finds no indulgence in his practice. Whether employed in legislative or judicial affairs, in the execution of trusts, or the ordinary pursuits of business, no bribe, no unsuspecting confidence, no loophole of escape through the convenient meshes of the law, no dishonest practices of trade, no absence of accountability to man, can divest

him of his responsibility to God, or seduce him from his integrity. He stands a bulwark against popular phrenzy, a witness against wickedness in high places, a remonstrant against legalized iniquity. He stands a supporter of that righteousness which exalteth a nation, the vindicator of that retribution which punishes crime, and the advocate of that mercy which decorates justice without vacating its claims or frustrating its ends. He is, in short, the conservator and exponent of principles in contempt of which private revenge would usurp the throne of public justice, universal distrust and suspicion would loosen all civil and social alliances, and the benign adjustment of society would disappear under the misrule of tyranny or barbarism.

The world can ill spare such exemplified

lessons of *fidelity*. She has none of her own, she originates none. The world is not rich enough to bear the loss ; and unconscious of it, will not seek to repair it. No wisdom of the world can evoke a reparation, because its morality never transcends a time-serving expediency ; and thus, destitute of a higher sanction, its best maxims are impracticable amid the clamors of selfishness, and the warrant of prevailing customs. But the world will not seek to repair the loss, because it hates that godliness and fidelity which present a living protest against its idolatry and profligacy. It must confess the excellence of that religion which maintains its walk with the unseen God ; but it cannot brook the reproach.

Notwithstanding this, the departure of such men is a severe misfortune, which should

be universally deplored ; and since the world can neither rectify nor mitigate it, the church, which is the nursery of godly and faithful men, must employ her ordained instrumentalities to supply the void.

For the communion of saints on earth mourns a severe bereavement when the godly man ceaseth. The tried and devoted disciple, whose example is a rebuke to the worldly professor, an incentive to the negligent, and a support to the struggling, appears among his brethren no more. The counsellor, whose lips drop heavenly wisdom for the inquiring and perplexed, and distil heavenly consolation for the sorrowing ; the helper of the ministry, whose burdens, too often thoughtlessly increased, he lightens, and whose superadded anxieties, too often disregarded, he shares ; the ruler, whose superintendence of

the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer, is marked by sagacity and diligence in providing for its spiritual maintenance, and by an intelligent and firm vindication of the faith once delivered to the saints, and who is counted worthy of double honor because he rules well ; the steward, whose employment of his Master's property yields a generous revenue to his Master's treasury, and makes him rich in treasure laid up in heaven, and whose talents are consecrated to the cause and the cross of a self-denying Saviour, and makes him rich in good works and rich toward God ; the diligent student of Scripture, who meekly submits his reason to the doctrines, his life to the precepts, and his heart to the sentiments of the most holy, only wise, and good God, and who is able to give a reason

for the faith that is in him ; the lover of good men and the lover of God, vacates the scene of his conflicts and his triumphs, and ascends to his rest and reward.

But alas, the record of the loss is not yet complete. The world may pause for a moment and reckon the effect on public transactions, and then relapses into its earthliness : it surveys the surface, and has no eye to inspect the depth of its deprivation. The church weeps when such a pillar falls, when such a star sets, when such a pilgrimage ceaseth. But there is a narrower circle, the church in miniature, a more visible similitude of heaven, within which the godly man moves amid relationships the most influential, tender, and responsible. It is the charmed circumference of home. Here he is protector, provider, and preceptor. He cherishes the most

sacred of earthly companions with a watchfulness that never sleeps, and a constancy and tenderness that never falter. He is her earthly staff and shield. \* \* \*

The endearing name of father kindles in his breast the noblest aspirations, and the keenest solicitude. He regards no exertion too great to promote the happiness of his children, and no sacrifice too costly to endow them with the qualifications which shall fit them for the highest usefulness. In prayerful dependence upon that God whose heritage they are, he strives to train them for glory, and honor, and immortality. And from childhood, therefore, they are taught in the Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus. As the priest of his household, he leads them to the morning and the evening

sacrifice. And in the light of his consistent example they early learn that the ways of wisdom are paths of pleasantness and peace. Consecrating them in infancy to the Triune God, he teaches them the nature of that holy covenant, and their obligation to be and to do what it requires. They can have no fellowship with the works of darkness ; they must not walk according to the fashion of this world, but as children of the light ; and he is careful to train them up under that covenant vow in the nurture of piety, believing that God, who is faithful, will in due time reward parental faithfulness, and visit them with his salvation. The waywardness of youth, the false claims of a world lying in wickedness, the artful suggestions addressed to parental vanity, the worldly conformity which prevails even in Christian families

when the love of many disciples waxes cold, have no weight with him who aims faithfully to meet the conditions of his covenant with God, and to win a share in the divine attestation, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." The godly and faithful father secures respect for his authority, while he exercises that leniency which is consistent with firmness, and that severity which is not inconsistent with love. His habitation, therefore, is in peace; for the discipline of such a family, by such a father, is most wise, salutary, and successful. There concord reigns; there the sterner, as well as the milder virtues, are nourished into a vigor-

ous activity ; there a cheerful and contented spirit breathes true happiness on all, and love forges its golden links round every heart, and binds them all in one. It is the vestibule of heaven. It is the emblem of that Home in the skies into which the loving Father receives his earth-born sons and daughters, who here learn submission to the Will that rules it, and that will is infinitely wise and good—and to the Law which regulates it, and that law is holy love.

No shadow falls upon that heavenly home. It receives constant accessions ; it dismisses none. The shadow falls here. The bereavement enters here. When a tried friend and neighbor walks no more among us, grey heads are bowed in grief, and younger hearts are saddened : we part with him most reluctantly, because we know his

sterling worth. If the stroke be hard for us to bear, who can weigh its severity when it falls once and again upon those ties which bind children to venerated and beloved parents? Some of life's ills may be bravely mastered, or soon forgotten; some of its losses may be retrieved: but no sublunary evil is so insurmountable as this, no loss is so irreparable. Is there then no relief? Mark the adorable interposition of God's loving kindness, which is better than life. Death must come, and snatch life's guardian from our embrace: but to hearts thus bereft and lacerated, a covenant God whispers, "I am the Father of the fatherless!" and to the departing saint whose latest anxieties are bent upon the filial group who cling the closer as the hour of separation approaches. "Leave your children unto me!"

Here then is the pledge of all-sufficient aid. The earthly support shall disappear ; but the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Such is the ample warrant for the filial prayer, Help, Lord, for the godly father ceaseth ; for the faithful guardian faileth from among his children !

And is there no consolation for the bereaved flock of Christ ? A sweet thought, that the end of the church militant is to train souls for the church triumphant ! A pillar of the sanctuary that falls here, stands there erect and crowned ! The star that sets on our night far spent, shines on there to set no more ! May we die the death of the righteous : for precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints ; and blessed are they that die in him. They

sleep in Jesus ; and them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him to share the inheritance of the saints in light.

Yet we who are left toiling can ill spare the godly and faithful man's allied encouragement, strength, and companionship. . . . But let us not seem to trust in an arm of flesh. For, amid all changes, however disastrous to human view, and all losses, however irretrievable by human might, the Lord of Hosts is the unfailing resource of his people. He never changes. Though he hides his face, it is to try our faith. The heavens are illuminated still, though a dismal cloud overspreads our sky, and intercepts our sight, and even that cloud is fringed with light. His cause on earth he will never abandon ; his people, however few and feeble, he will never forsake. The godly understand this,

because they are in covenant with God. They hear him saying in such an hour as this, "The ark is mine! Be still, and know that I am your God! The godly man ceaseth; therefore cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; and trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. For I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; *I will help thee!*"

Such is the gracious warrant, in a time like this, for the church's prayer, Help, Lord! for the godly professor ceaseth; for the faithful ruler faileth from among the children of thy heritage. . . . .

It is written, The righteous shall enter into peace. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright:* FOR THE END OF THAT MAN IS PEACE.



















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